Freedom of Information Act

FOIAonline Part 2

DNS-36 CNO FOIA

Current as of 10 July 2015

Objectives

- ✓ Processing FOIA Requests
  - ✓ Uploading Responsive Documents
  - ✓ Generating an Invoice
  - ✓ Closing out a FOIA Request
- ✓ Using the Search Function
- ✓ Using the Reports Function
- ✓ Configuring Profile Settings
  - ✓ Administration Settings
  - ✓ Individual Account Settings
- ✓ <u>NEVER Use</u> -Export Request Function

FOIAonline – Round 2

(We hope you have better redaction methods!)

Processing FOIA Requests

You've reviewed responsive documents and applied appropriate redactions (manually, Redax, or Adobe Pro). Now, its time to upload them to FOIAonline…

- A case *must be assigned to a specific caseworker* to use this function.

- Responsive Records can be uploaded with the following release types:

  a) UU – **Unredacted Unreleasable**

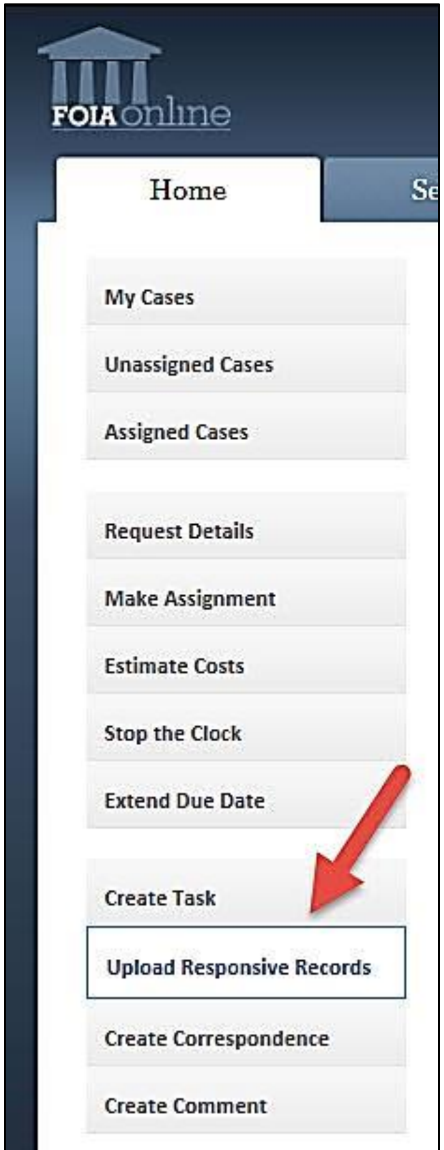
  b) RU – **Redacted Unreleasable**

  c) UR – **Unredacted Releasable**

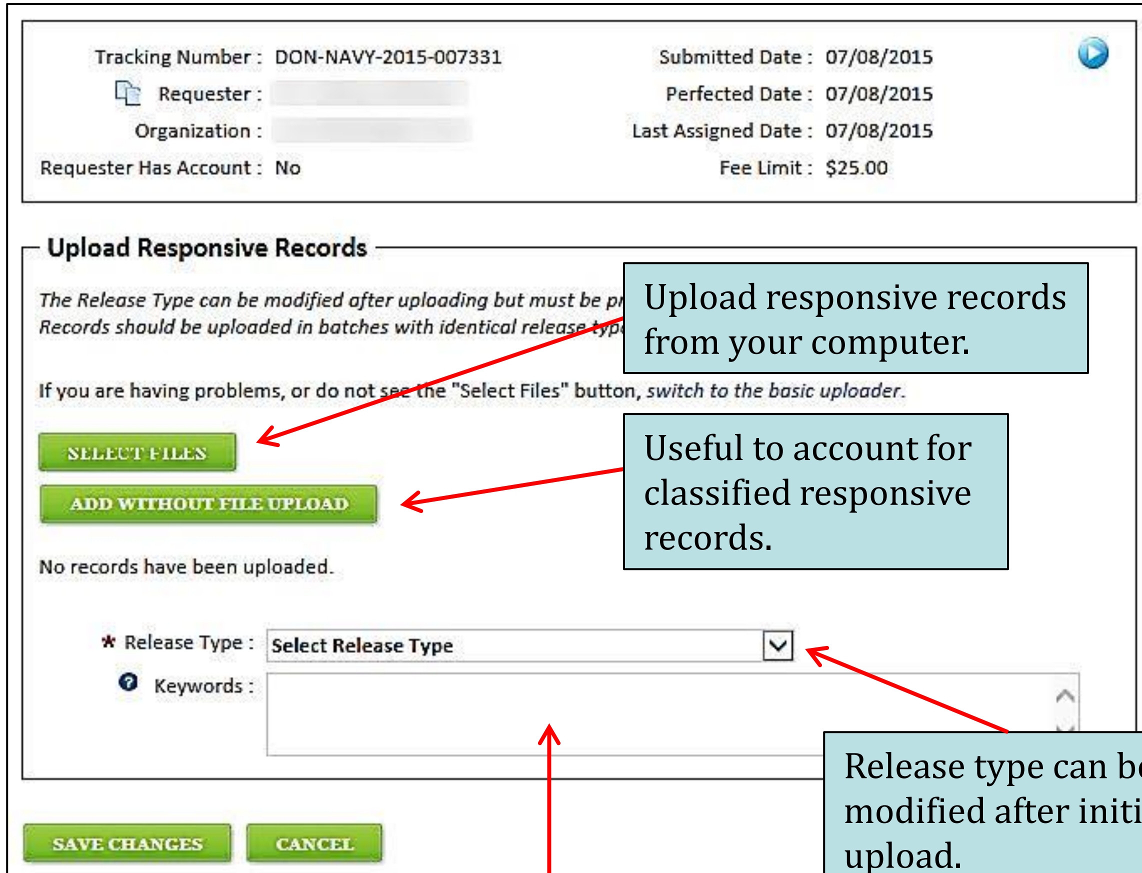
  d) RR – **Redacted Releasable**

  e) REQ – **Release to Requester Only**

Uploading Responsive Documents



* **Attention: Verify the files that you intend to upload before including them in the casefile.**



Upload responsive records from your computer.

Useful to account for classified responsive records.

Release type can be modified after initial upload.

Keywords are used to aide members of the public who are browsing FOIA requests.

Responsive Documents

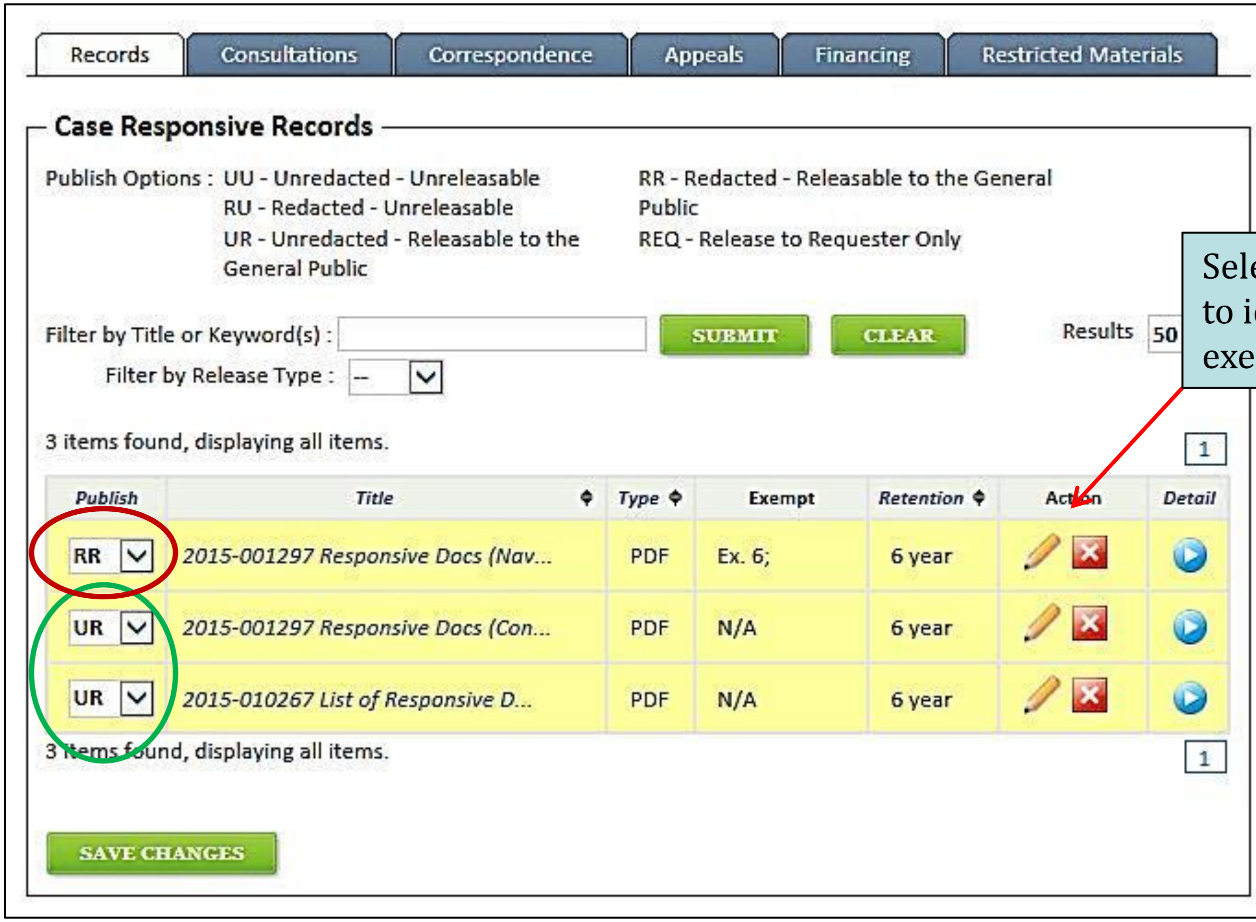
"So…my next question is, 'Who can see the responsive documents in FOIAonline?'"

Type of Responsive Document	Requester	Requester & Public after Closure	Internal Only
Redacted Releasable - RR		X	
Redacted Unreleasable - UR			X
Unredacted Releasable - UR		X	
Unredacted Unreleasable - UU			X
* Release to Requester Only - REQ	X		

* A requester must have an account to view the REQ files in FOIAonline. Otherwise, files must be sent to the requester via email, fax, USPS, etc.

Case Responsive Records

Responsive Record End-Result:



Select the pencil icon to identify applicable exemptions.

Responsive Records in Partial and Full Denials must be retained for 6 years.

Pop Quiz!

- How long must responsive records be maintained by an organization?

  a) 2 years

  b) 6 years

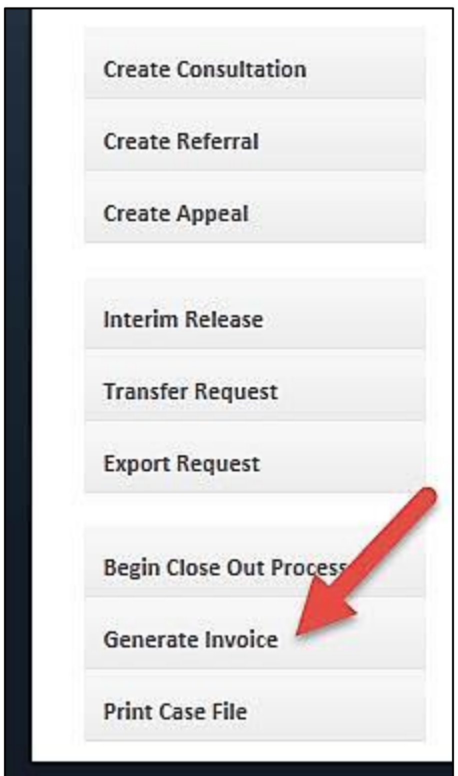
  c) It depends

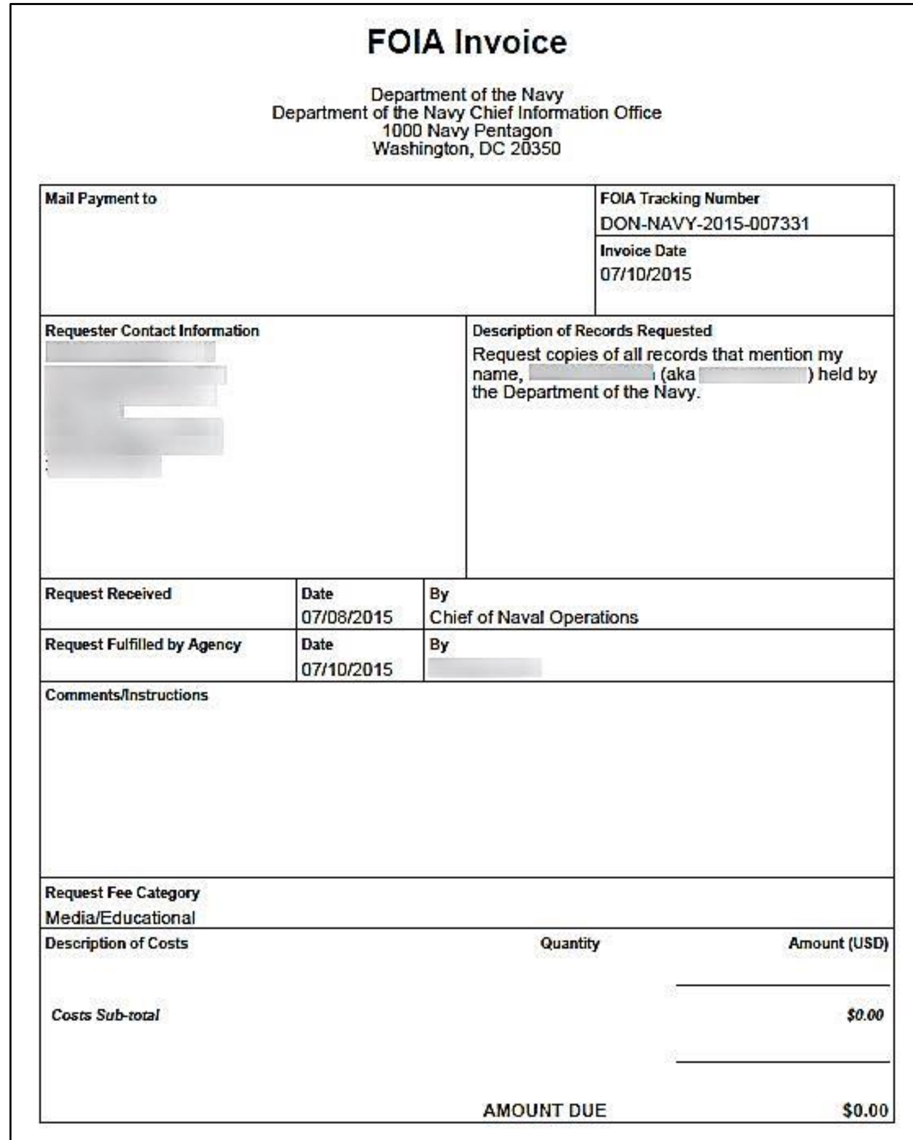
  d) Are you kidding me? I get rid of my FOIA doc's ASAP! (to forget the agony of having to process those *pesky* requests)

- **Answer: C – Full Grant records must be kept for 2 years; Partial and Full Denial records must be kept for 6 years.**

Generating an Invoice

- Left-clicking the "Generate Invoice" button will create a PDF file displaying total fees that are based on the Admin Costs accumulated in FOIAonline.





FOIA Invoice

Department of the Navy
Department of the Navy Chief Information Office
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350

Mail Payment to	**FOIA Tracking Number** DON-NAVY-2015-007331 **Invoice Date** 07/10/2015
Requester Contact Information [redacted]	**Description of Records Requested** Request copies of all records that mention my name, [redacted] (aka [redacted]) held by the Department of the Navy.

Request Received	**Date** 07/08/2015	**By** Chief of Naval Operations
Request Fulfilled by Agency	**Date** 07/10/2015	**By** [redacted]

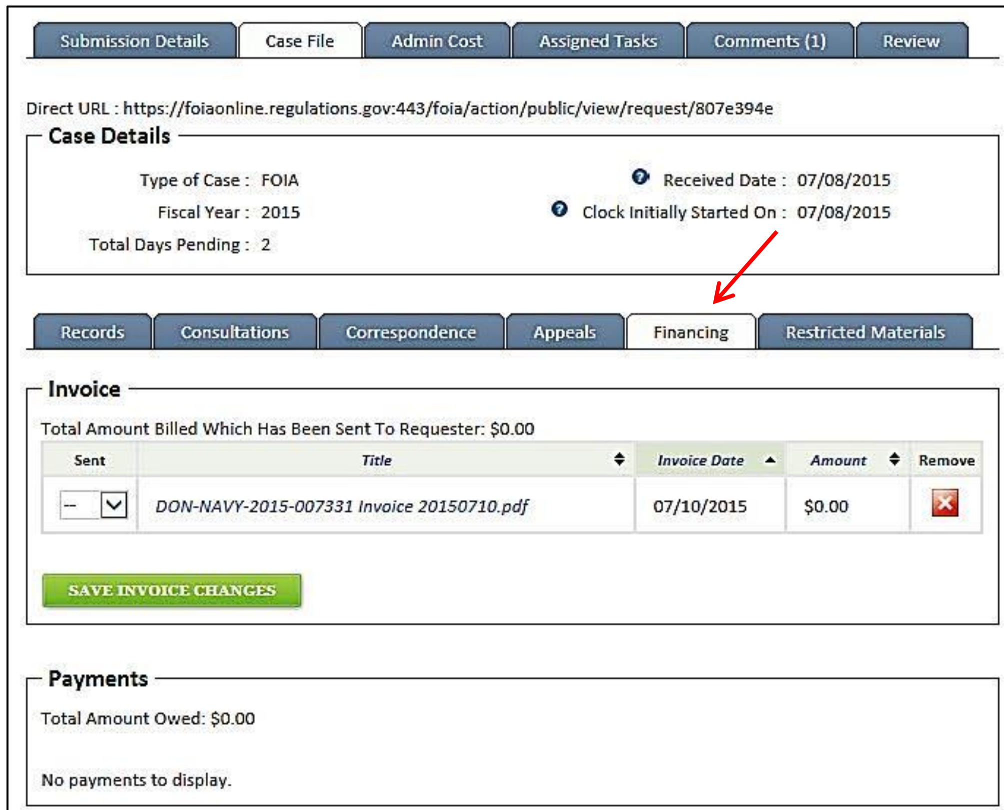
Comments/Instructions

Request Fee Category
Media/Educational

Description of Costs	Quantity	Amount (USD)
Costs Sub-total		*$0.00*
	AMOUNT DUE	$0.00

Generating an Invoice

- Return to the Request Details section of the case file.
- Select the “Financing Tab” to view the invoice.



Closing out a FOIA Request *

- Closing a request is a three-part process:

  1) Apply a Disposition

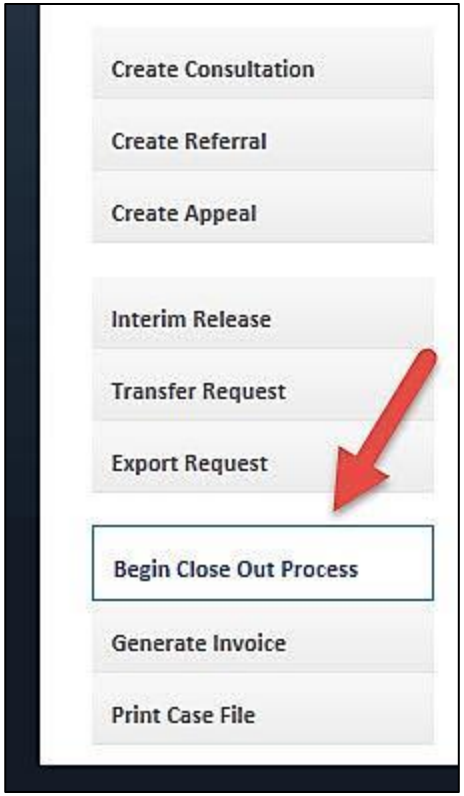
  2) Perform the Case File Review **

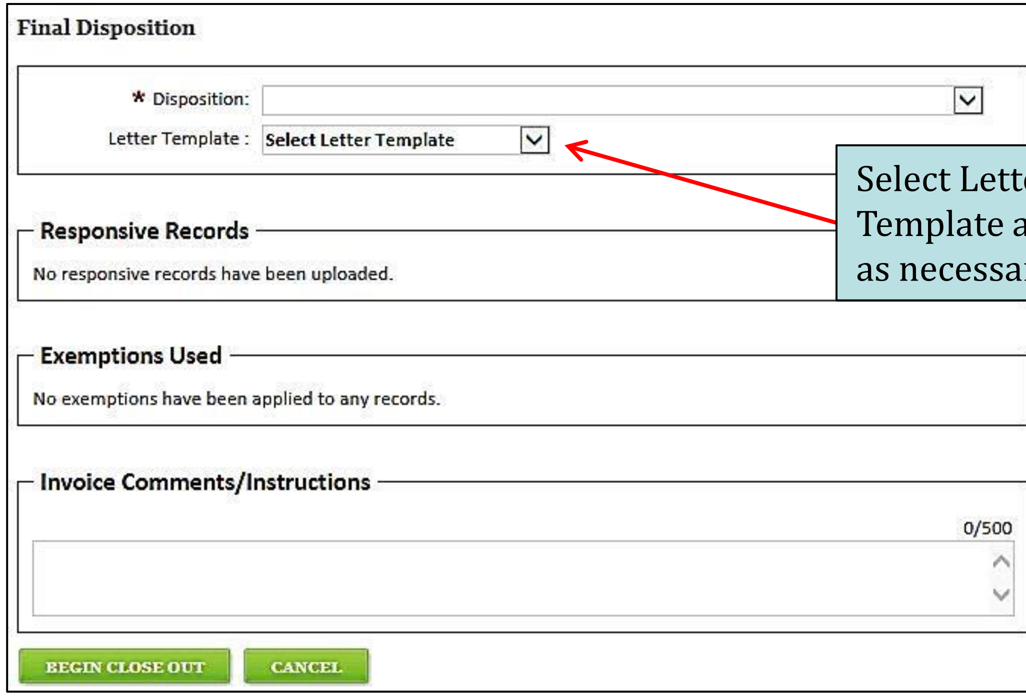
  3) Send the Final Disposition Notice

* If a case is not assigned to an individual caseworker, then the closeout process cannot commence.

** Some commands are configured so that no review is required. In that case, the second step will not be performed.

Selecting a Final Disposition





Select Letter Template and edit as necessary.

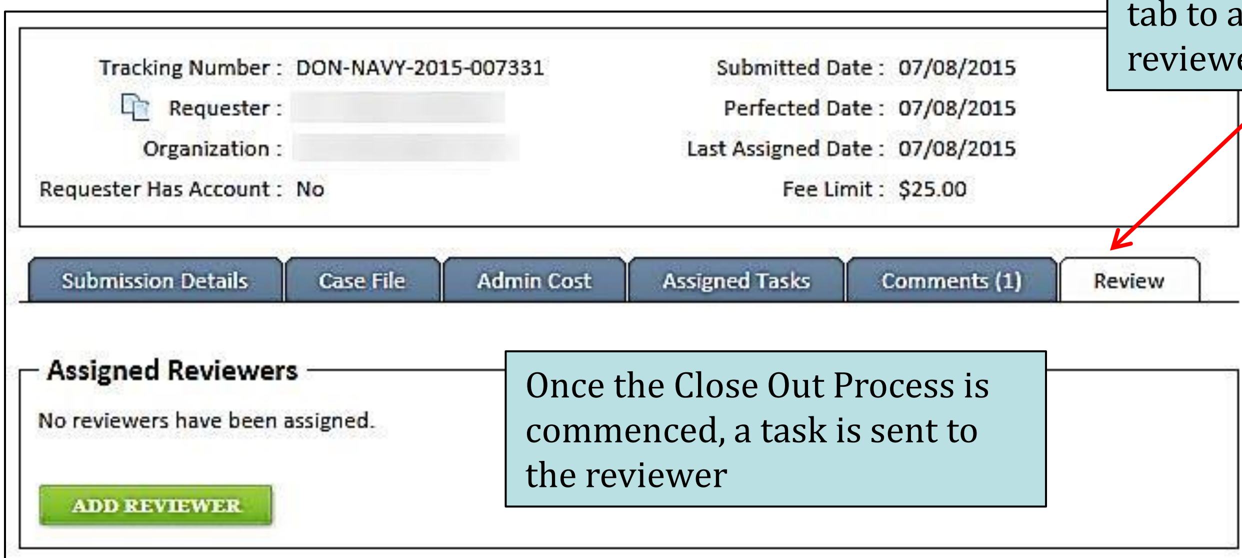
- Upon beginning the closeout process, this letter will be saved as a PDF in "Other Correspondence."

- A **"Full Grant"** disposition will require at least one record uploaded with no associated exemptions or exclusions.
- A **"Partial Grant / Partial Denial"** will require at least applied exemption and at least one record publishable.
- A **"Full Denial"** requires no publishable records to be uploaded.

Performing Case Review

- The review process allows a supervisory FOIA official to review a case file before the final response letter is sent to a requester.
- If a review is required according to agency settings, the closeout process cannot begin until a reviewer is selected.

Select the Review tab to assign a reviewer.



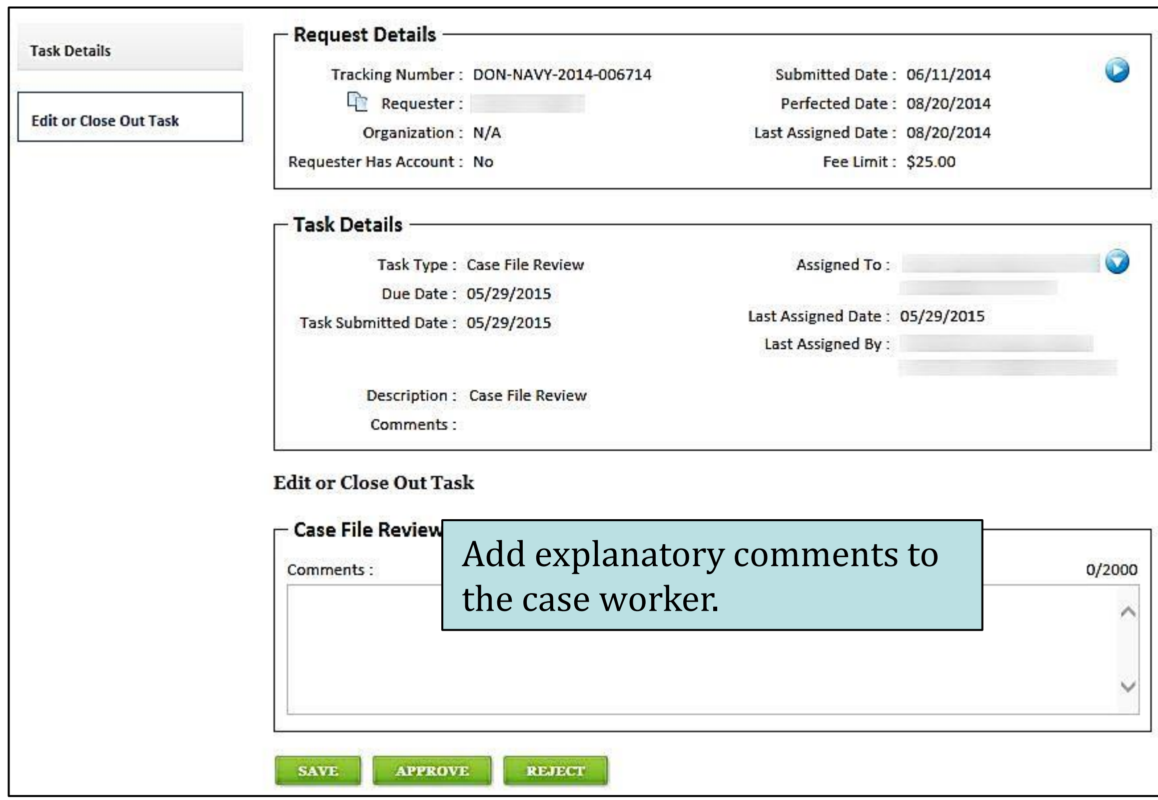
Once the Close Out Process is commenced, a task is sent to the reviewer

Conducting a Review

- The reviewing official will receive an automatic email from FOIAonline notifying them that a task has been assigned to them. The task can be found in "***My Cases***."

Critical Areas to Review:

1) Disposition Type
2) Responsive Records
3) Correspondence
4) Complete Case File



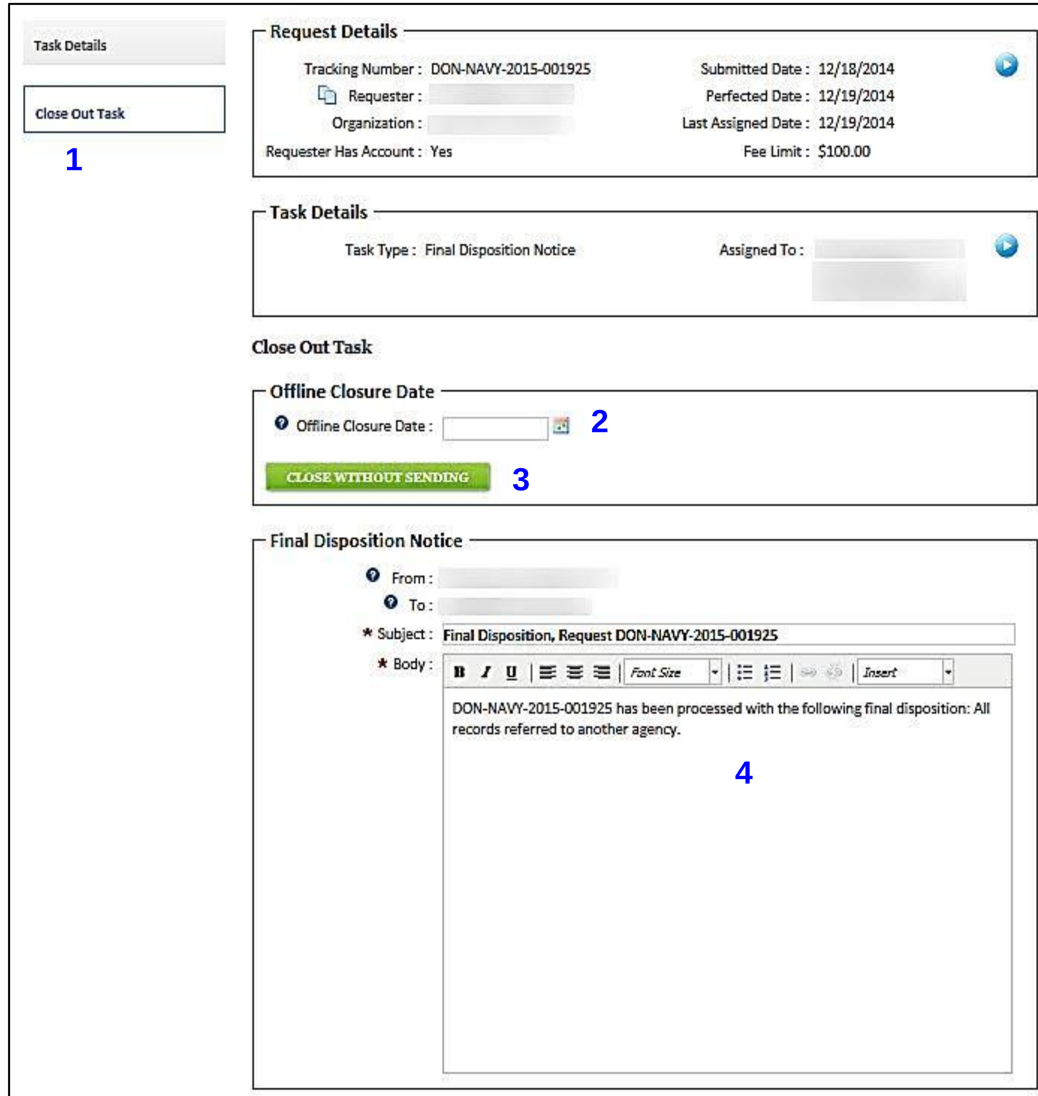
Approve the review if the casefile is complete and the letter and records are correct.

Reject the review if the case requires rework or correction.

Sending a Final Disposition Notice

After a favorable review, the caseworker will receive a "***Close Out***" Task which can be found in "***My Cases***"

1) Select "Close Out Task"
2) Choose offline closure date (if backdating)
3) Close case without sending final notice (if sent by other means).
4) Edit Subject and Body of notice.
   - It may be appropriate to acknowledge files that are being sent to the requester as well as applicable fees.
   - You may also simply refer them to enclosed official correspondence.

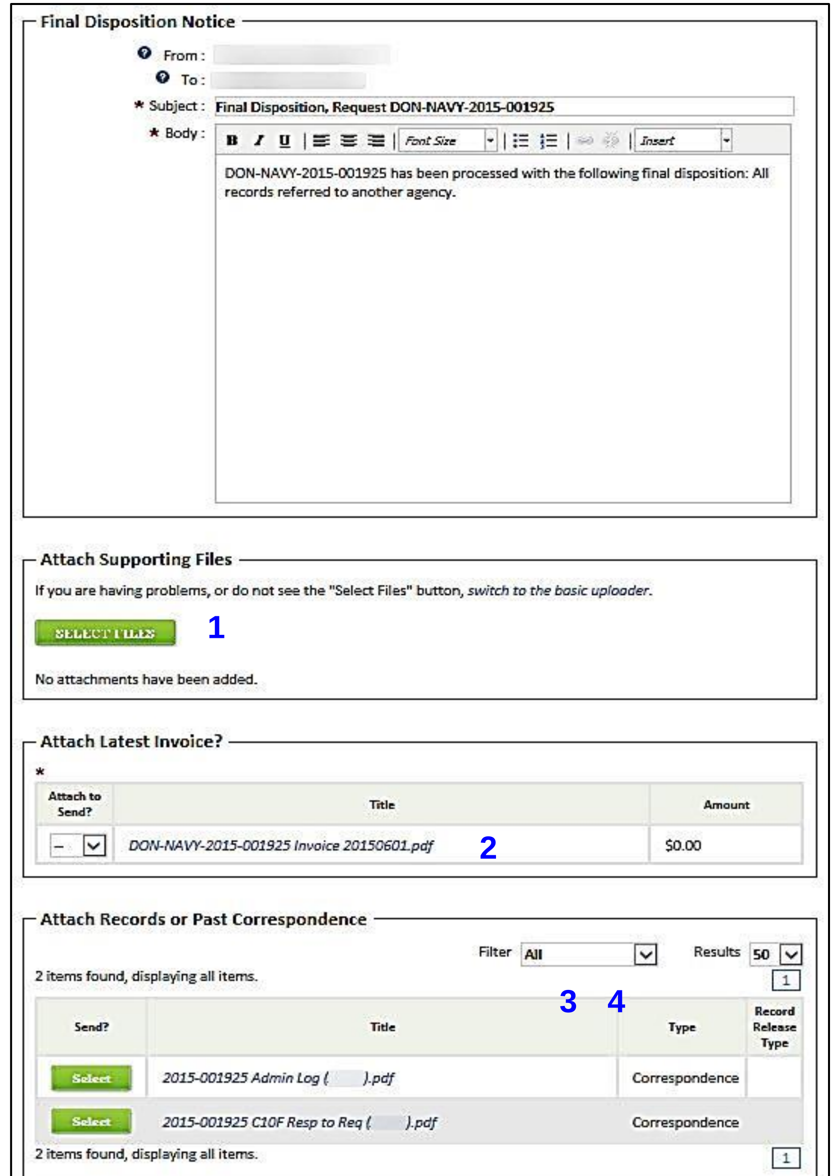


Sending a Final Disposition Notice

After amending the Final Disposition Notice, perform the following:

1) Upload Supporting Files * (*optional*)
2) Attach the latest invoice (*especially if there are billable fees*).
3) Attach applicable correspondence to requester.
   - This could include an official letterhead response
4) Attach responsive records. (*Now is a great time to conduct another review of releasable records – for good measure*)

* These only include files sent by requesters.



Pop Quiz!

- Which of the following is arguably **NOT** a *good* time to check to ensure you're including the correct responsive documents?

  a) Before I upload them to the case file.

  b) After I've uploaded them to the case file.

  c) During the case close out process.

  d) After the final disposition notice has been sent to the requester along with responsive documents.

- **Answer: D – Yep, it's now officially too late. (I hope you included the correct, redacted records!)**

Referrals and Consultations

“But wait…you haven’t really talked about referrals and consultations?”

- Referrals and consultations are processed in the system in a manner similar to FOIA requests.
- Please refer to the FOIA processing handout for step-by-step instructions on how to process them in FOIAonline.

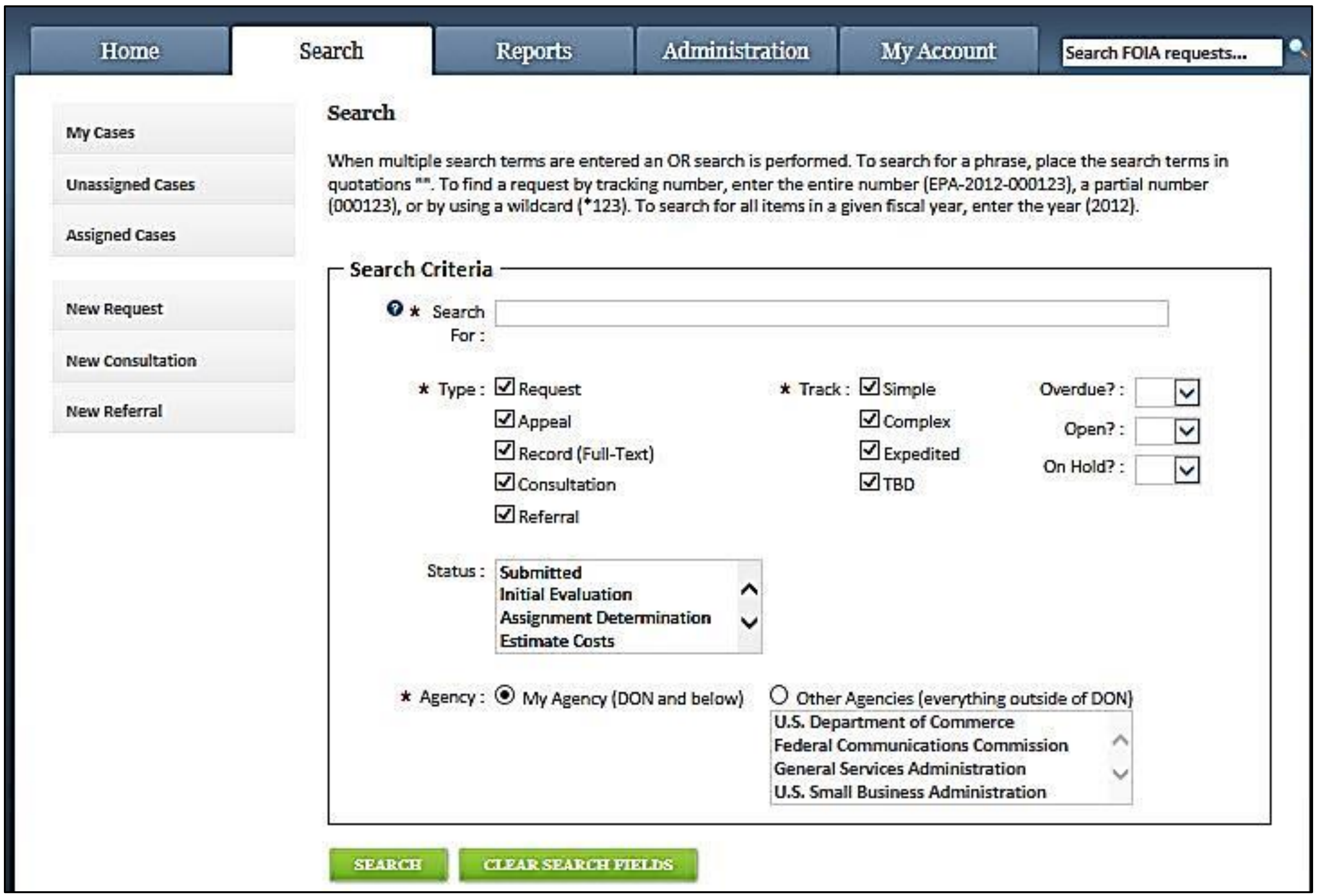
Using the Search Function

- The “Search” function enables the user to conduct an advanced search for specific that the simple search window (in the upper right corner of the home screen)

- The advanced search includes:
  a) Requests
  b) Appeals
  c) Full-Text Records
  d) Consultations
  e) Referrals.
- Closed cases can only be searched for using the advanced “Search” function.

Using the Search Function

- Select the “Search” tab at the top of the web page.
- Toggle search criteria to locate specific cases.



Using the Reports Function

Agency Reports include the following:

- **Annual Report**: These reports are also public facing and contain real-time updates regarding request, referral, appeal and consultation metrics. The reports are identical to those produced in the year-end annual report.

- **Year-End Annual Report**: The year-end annual report is generated after the fiscal year has ended and all request processing has been completed.

***** Once the data entered into FOIAonline is guaranteed to be accurate, this function could take the place of traditional feeder reports (DD2564) *****

- **Backlog Report**: Produces a list of all requests that are flagged as backlogged. (*very useful for commands that receive many requests*)

- **Workload Report**: Produces a breakdown of the requests, appeals, referrals, consultations, and tasks assigned to users at the user's level and for individuals below them.

- **Record Retention Report**: Monitors the retention periods of released records and allows privileged users to extend the retention period or remove expired records.

Using the Reports Function

Agency Reports include the following (continued):

Round up your tasks with this report.

- **Expedited Processing Report**: Produces a report of all requests and referrals which have expedited processing tasks.
- **Fee Waiver Report**: Produces a report of all requests and referrals which have fee waiver tasks.
- **Overdue Cases Report**: Produces a list of all requests, referrals, and appeals which are overdue.
- **Delinquency Report**: Produces a list of all requesters who have outstanding fee payments for 30, 60, or 90 days.

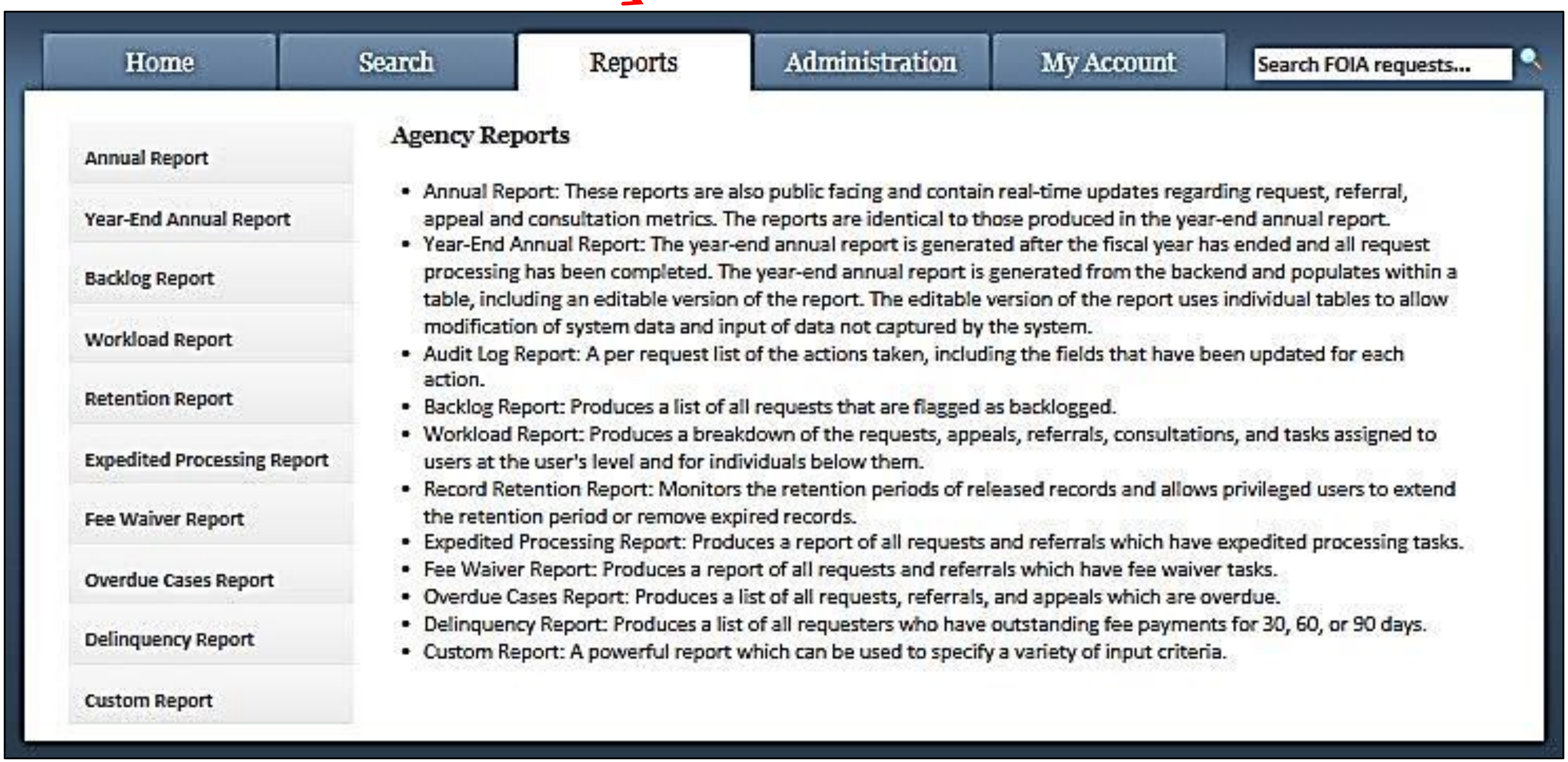
*** Very useful for commands who likely have delinquent commercial requesters ***

- **Custom Report**: A powerful report which can be used to specify a variety of input criteria.

The most-used report at DNS-36

Using the Reports Function

- Select the “Reports” Tab at the top of the webpage.
- Choose the report you wish to perform.
- All reports have the ability to be converted to Excel or csv format.



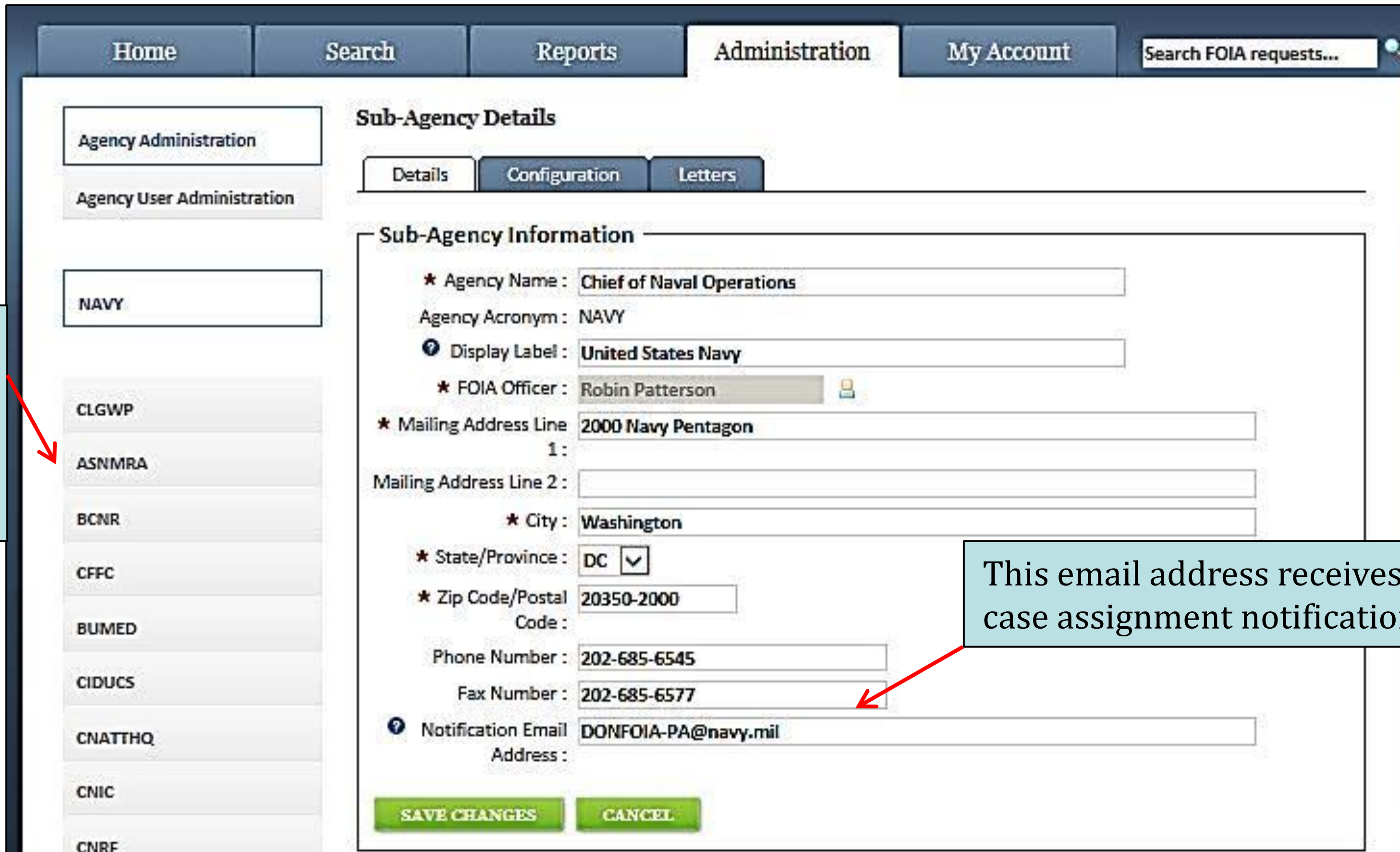
Pop Quiz!

- Which report could be especially useful to commands who receive requests from commercial requesters who submit complex, labor-intensive requests?

- **Answer: Delinquency Report – It produces a list of all requesters who have outstanding fee payments for 30, 60, or 90 days.**

Configuring Profile Settings

- To change your component and subcomponents’ settings, select the “Administration” Tab.

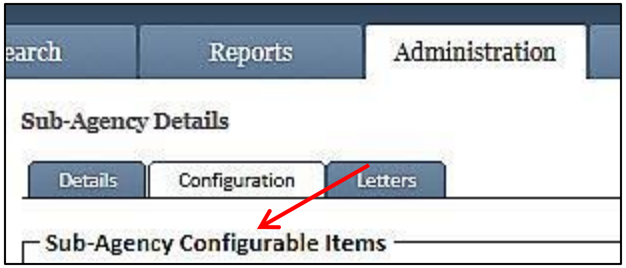


All subordinate commands (“sub components”)

This email address receives new case assignment notifications.

Configuring Profile Settings

- To reconfigure your command's FOIAonline settings, select the "**Configuration**" Tab on the "**Administration**" page.



- Configurable Items:
  - Agency Invoices
  - Records Retention
  - Reviewer Settings
  - Remittance Contact Information

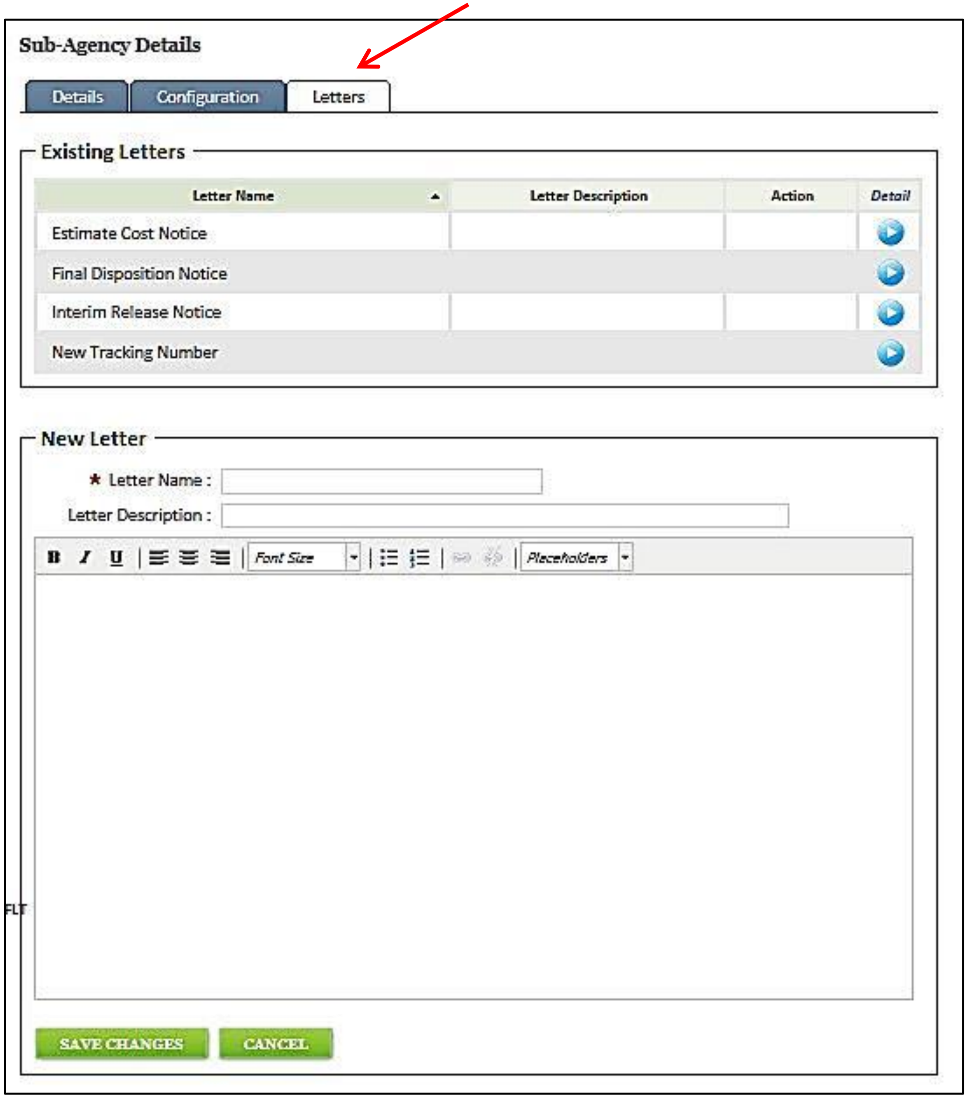
Configuring Profile Settings

To create or amend letter templates, select the "**Letters**" Tab.

- You may create new letters for use in various stages of FOIA request processing.
- Letter templates can save time while ensuring correspondence standardization.

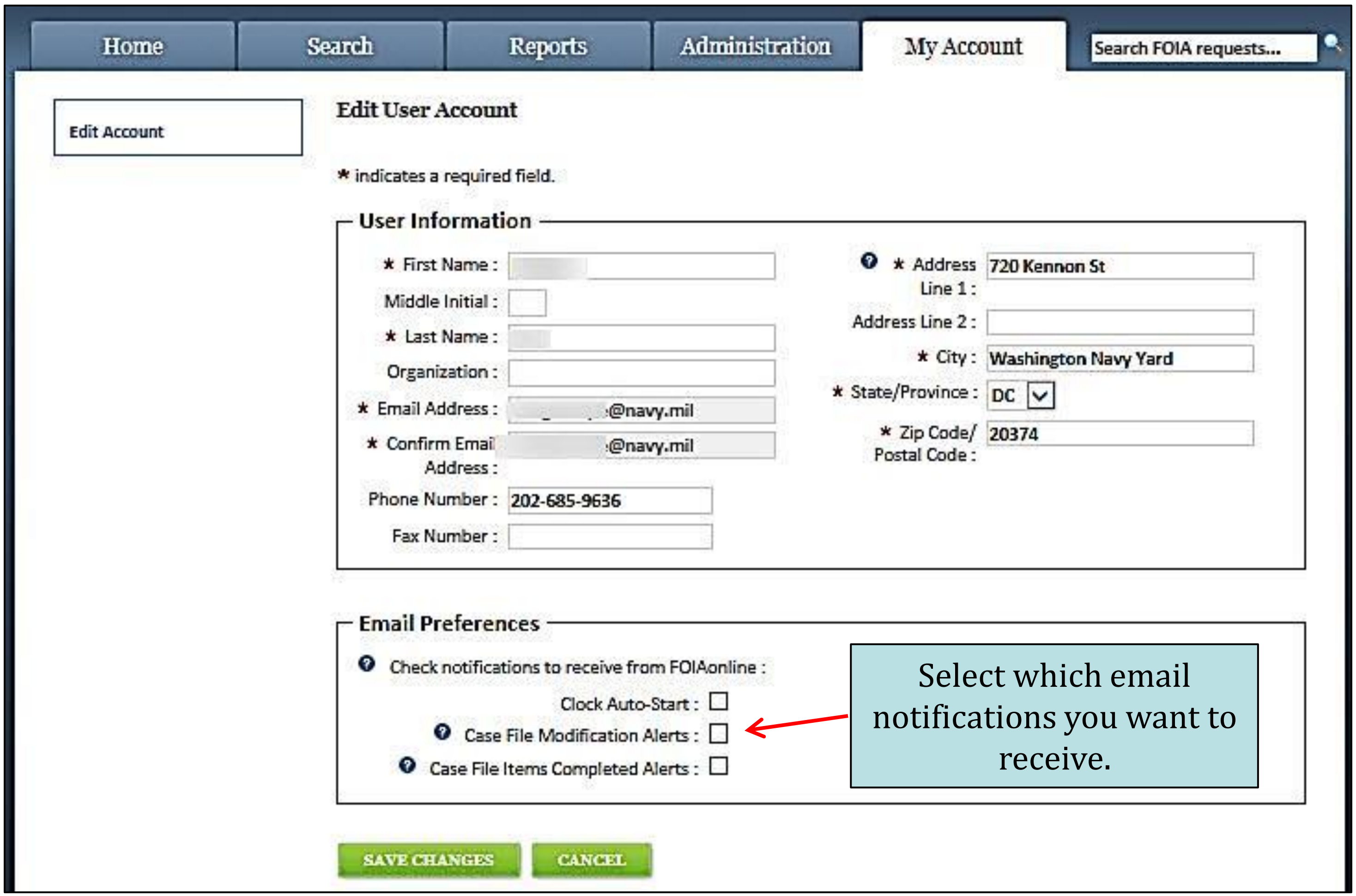
** Attention **

Use discretion when using template letters. Sometimes, official letterhead correspondence is more appropriate.



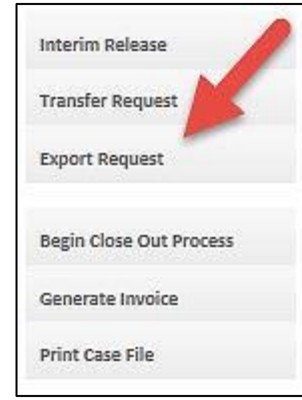
Configuring Profile Settings

To adjust your own account settings, select the "My Account" tab.



Export Request Function

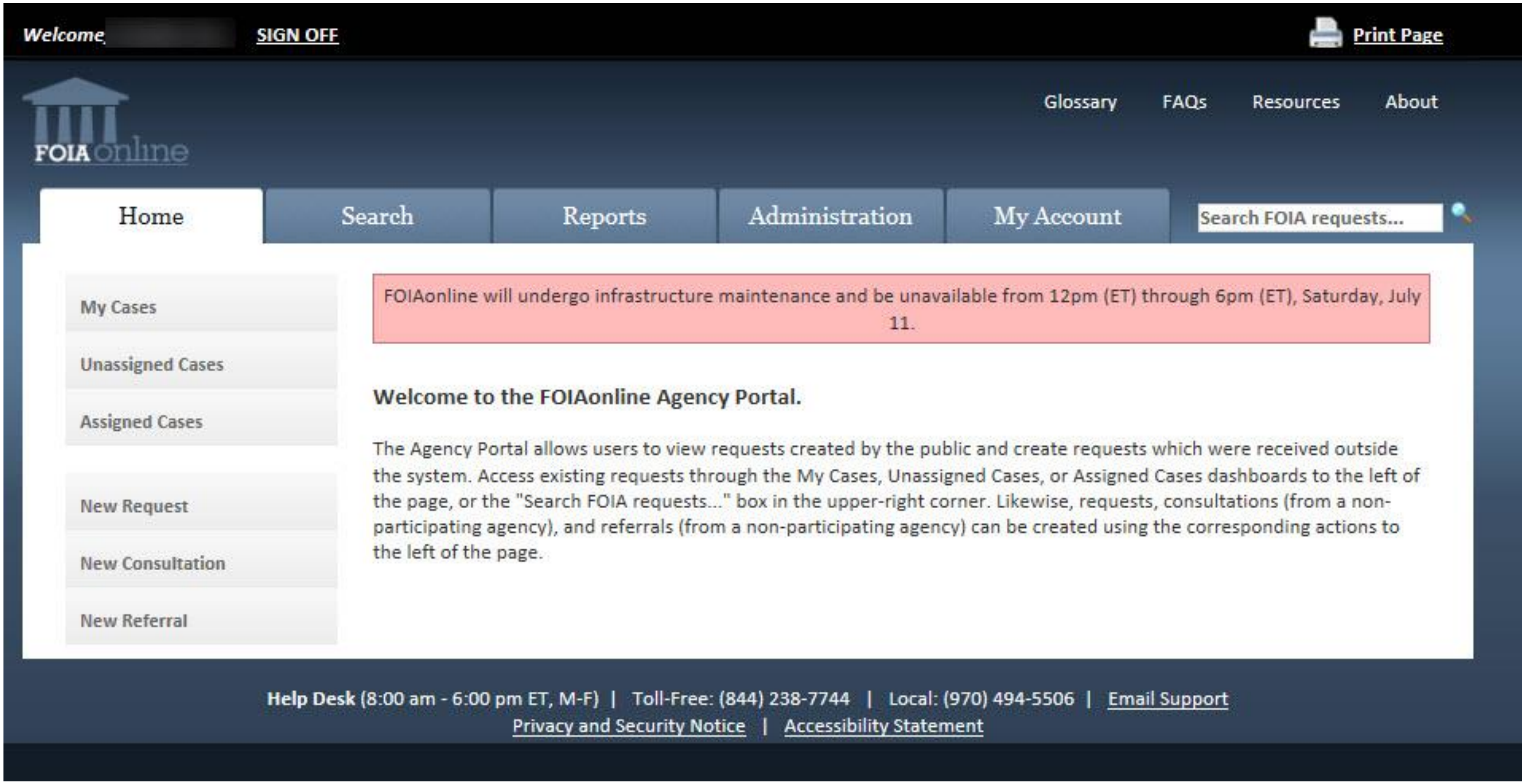
"What is the mysterious "Export Request" Function?"



- Exporting a Request <u>deletes</u> it from the system.
- There are two instances in which you might use this function:
  1) To delete a pure **Privacy Act** Request received in FOIAonline. (C*ommunicate this with the requester and process it separately*).
  2) To delete practice or "test" FOIA requests – a great way to better understand the tool.
- When you export a request, you receive an email receipt that contains comprehensive information regarding the request including metadata.

*** This should NOT be used as a "*convenient*" backlog reduction method! ***

FOIAonline Demonstration



FOIAonline

Common Pitfalls

- Failure to accurately record administrative costs.
- Failure to assess and track appropriate fees.
- Selecting the incorrect Final Disposition.
- Uploading the incorrect correspondence or responsive documents.
- Failure to enter into the system any requests, referrals, and consultations received from a method other than FOIAonline.
- Failure to completely close a case, by not executing the **final "Close Out" task**.
- Closing a case without building a complete electronic file (processing notes, emails, memos)

Saved Rounds